

GREAT INTERNET SEARCH TOOLS

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Are you using the Internet for market research?

Are you looking for an inexpensive way to gather market research? Are you trying to cut the time and cost of gathering market research? Most companies are using the Internet for some type of research. The purpose of this article is to make individuals better understand the Internet terminology used to search the Internet, make them more efficient in their Internet searches (no cost), and provide Internet tools that can be of assistance in finding information. Hopefully these resources will save you time, money and also aid your company in its international decision making process.

TIME SAVING SEARCH ENGINES

WWW.COPERNIC.COM

This is a software program that you must download onto your computer to use the search tools. Copernic 2001 Basic is a FREE software download. The Copernic software simultaneously queries several Internet search engines, which are grouped in several categories: "The Web" (plus one optional language or country-based category from a list of 15 available categories), "Newsgroups," and "E-mail Addresses" to name a few. The software allows you to store your previous searches, highlights the keywords in the web pages presented, and updates the search software on start-up.

Web sites Copernic - The Web searches: Altavista, Excite, Fast Search, FindWhat, HotBot, Lycos, MSN Web Search, open Directory Project, WebCrawler Yahoo!

With the Copernic 2001 Basic, you can choose one additional search category.

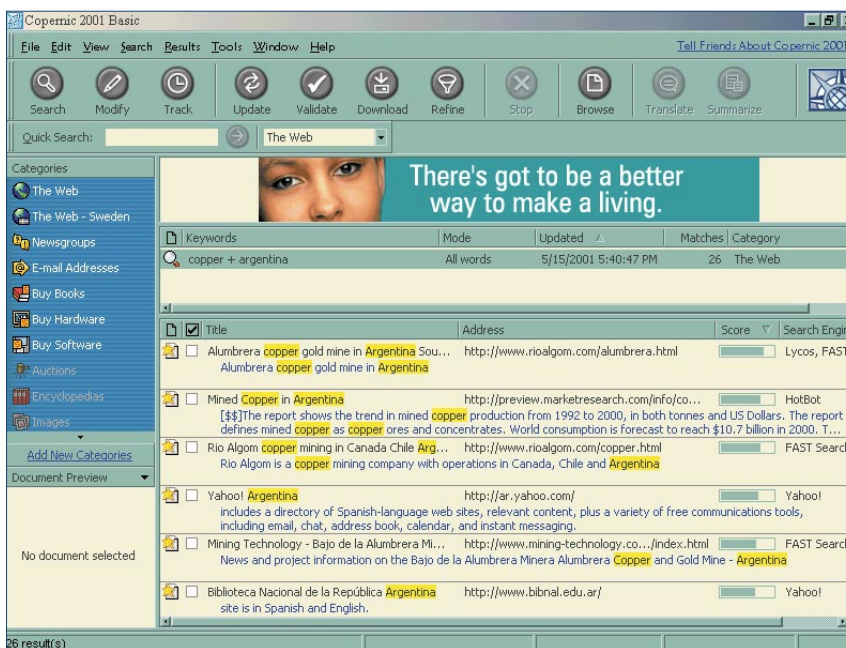
Additional language or country based category options:

The Web in French, The Web in German, The Web in Italian, The Web in Spanish, The Web — Australia, The Web — Canada, The Web — UK, The Web — Portugal, The Web — Belgium, The Web — Brazil, The Web — India, The Web — Netherlands, The Web — Poland, The Web — Sweden, and The Web — Switzerland

There are a couple of other versions of Copernic (Pro and Plus) that you can purchase at www.copernic.com for additional search features.

WWW.DOGPILE.COM

Dogpile searches several search engines simultaneously. Dogpile displays the results of 4 search engines at a time, and lists up to 10 web sites for each search engine query. Dogpile shows which search engine lists the web site. You will need to click "Next" to continue reviewing the other search engines' results. After you have submitted your search request, on the first page you will see a shaded area titled, "Are you looking for:" which suggests other keyword possibilities that you can use to search Dogpile.



Web sites Dogpile searches:

AltaVista, Bay9, Direct Hit, Dogpile Web Catalog, FindWhat, Google, GoTo.com, InfoSeek, Kanoodle, LookSmart, Lycos, Open Directory, RealNames, Sprinks by About Yahoo!

WWW.GOOGLE.COM

Google uses a program that matches your query to text within a website and returns information relevant to your search. Google also looks at the pages that are linked to the website, and gives priority to sites that have query words that appear near each other. Google searches are NOT case sensitive. If you type more than one word in your query, Google will only return sites that contain all of your query words. This site does not support wildcards (*). This site searches for information on the Internet in 26 different languages.

WWW.INFOZOID.COM

This is a Metasearch engine that has several different types of search tools, but uses "Web Search" as the primary tool. Infozoid has the ability to search all sites listed, or check specific sites you want to search. It also has several ways to display your query results:

1. By title and/or summary,
2. List results by search engine or mixed together by relevance
3. Decide how many results listed per page

In performing your keyword search, the default is "Native," which means the operators such as "*" and "+" can be used if the search engine accepts these terms. The results are based on the relevance to the search engines searched by Infozoid, and Infozoid's ranking system.

Web sites Infozoid searches:

AllTheWeb, AltaVista, AOL, Direct Hit, Excite, Hotbot, Infoseek, Looksmart, Lycos, MSN, NBCi, Thunderstone, TopClick, WebCrawler, Yahoo!

Infozoid can perform searches in French, German, Italian, and Spanish. Choosing

SEARCH VOCABULARY

You can narrow your search quickly if you use certain terminology that is recognized by most Web search engines. Here are some of the common terms:

Quotes

Placing words within quotation marks (" ") creates a phrase; it returns a match only when the engine finds the exact word sequence. Example: "minnesota trade office"

Asterisk

An asterisk (*) is also known as a wild card; it must be placed on the right-hand side of a word or embedded within a word (attached to the word). Normally sites require at least three characters to the left. Use an asterisk to find various spellings or related words. Example: export* would return matches of export, exports, exporter, and exporting.

AND operator

Search results must contain all words joined by the AND statement. Example: commercial AND service.

AND NOT operator

Search results cannot contain the word that follows the AND NOT statement. Example: software AND NOT integrator will find sites about software itself but eliminate sites about software integrator.

OR operator

Search results must contain at least one of the words joined by the OR statement. Example: distributor OR agent lists sites that contain either word.

Plus

Adding a plus sign (+) directly in front of a word requires that the word be included in all search results. The (+) goes between two words in a multiple word search. Example: export +assistance

Minus

Adding a minus sign (-) directly in front of a word indicates that the word should not be found in search results. Example: commerce -chamber

Parentheses

Use parentheses to build complex search queries that incorporate other special words and characters. Example: NAFTA AND (Canada OR Mexico) lists sites about either country pertaining to NAFTA.

Capitalization

Searches typed in all lowercase letters will match for either uppercase or lowercase letters. Uppercase letters in a search word will match only to uppercase letters. Generally it is better to use lowercase letters in your search phrases. Example: minneapolis will match minneapolis, Minneapolis, minnEapolis, and so on; Minneapolis will match only Minneapolis.

Advanced Searches or Search within a Search

Start with a broad search and then click on "Advanced Search" or "Search within results." This allows a broad search to be narrowed. Example: export assistance then advanced search, Miami.

INTERNET SEARCH TIPS AND TRICKS

Check "Help" or "Search Tips"

Most search engines have a "Help" button within their site that offers tips and tricks on how to best do searches on their search engine site. Take advantage of the information they provide to help speed up your searches. The "Help" section tells what terminology is accepted, such as wildcards (*).

Select search words

Think or write down a list of possible word combinations before you start your search. You may need to try several variations to narrow the search to exactly what you're looking for. Think like a detective. Avoid using common words such as, "of," "a," and "it."

Check your spelling

Spelling and capitalization can make a difference in your search. Be sure everything is correct before you start your search

Word focus

Make your searches as specific as possible. If you are looking for distributors of paint supplies, do a search on "paint contractors," for example, not "paint supplies" or "distributors." Note: Word selection will be influenced by the web site you are using.

Advance Search

Many web sites provide an "Advance Search" field, or this could be under "Help". This field can help narrow your search. This option explains the further qualifications that are allowed in order to search categories, parts of a web site, and a word phrase.

Search within a search

Start with a broad search and then click on "Search within results." Some web sites have this feature to be able to search within the results of your original word search.

Timing

Try off-peak hours. As with anything on the Web, the speed of your searches depends in part on how many other people are using the search tool at the same time. It also depends on the speed and reliability of your connection.

Save searches

If you want to save a search on your computer that you will want to come back to at a later date, use the FILE then SAVE function in the Internet program you are using (Microsoft Explorer or Netscape). This is the same as working offline. Some search engines have the feature, which allows you to save your searches in their program or on the Internet. Note: This is NOT clicking on favorites and adding the site to your favorite list.

a different language will change the search engines queried.

WWW.MAMMA.COM

This site is similar to other metasearch tools. Best option is to use the "Power Search." This site accepts the operators-phrase, And, Or to help narrow your search and includes a filter option.

Web sites Mamma searches:

Askjeeves, FindWhat, Go To, InfoSeek, Lycos, MSN, NBCi, Yahoo!

WWW.METACRAWLER.COM

A metasearch tool that queries several search engines simultaneously to find the most relevant information. This site can search different categories such as domain name, directories, and newsgroups. When you type in a word query, your choices are: find "all" words, "any" words or a word "phrase." To take advantage of the sites capabilities, click on the "Power Search" option. "Power Search" permits the selection of search engines used, how to view the results, domain/origin area (i.e. Australia), how much time to wait for the results, number of results per source, and number of results per page. MetaCrawler also allows you to perform a search by country.

Web sites MetaCrawler searches:

AltaVista, DirectHit, Excite, FindWhat, Google, GoTo, Infoseek, Looksmart, Lycos, Metacatalog, WebCrawler

WWW.METOR.COM

Metor has three general search categories to choose from — "Search Engines," "Directories," and "Reviewed Sites." This site has the ability to choose more specific categories such as "Business and Finance." Metor is another site that submits information simultaneously to several search engines and directories to find the most relevant information. This search tool has created specific search categories to assist people with their query. You will need to specify how much time Metor spends gathering information from other sites. Once the information is returned, the bottom of the first page will have "Check", "Analyze" and "Browse" to further focus and review your search.

Web sites Metor searches:

AltaVista, Euroseek Excite FAST SEARCH, Google, Hotbot, Infoseek, Lycos, North Light, WebCrawler. ■

